

The parentage of Isabelle Durham Sloan¹

The proof that Isabelle Durham was the daughter of Frances "Fanny" Durham and an unknown father is found in the estate records of John Durham.

BACKGROUND

Isabelle Durham was born in Kentucky in 1850 according to the 1870² and 1880³ censuses. She married Francis M. Sloan in Casey County, Kentucky on 23 February 1869⁴ and this is the earliest record found for her.

On 10 July 1877, Isabelle and Francis sold "one undivided third part of one share of all the land owned by John Durham at his death, said share is Knowned as the share of Fannie Durham Daughter of said John Durham Decd."⁵

FANNY DURHAM, DAUGHTER OF JOHN DURHAM AND NANCY LUCAS

Fanny was one of eight children from John Durham's marriage to Nancy Lucas.⁶ After Nancy's death John married Margaret Brown,⁷ and his household in 1850 included children from both marriages:⁸

- John Durham, 54
- Margaret, 46
- John L, 21

¹ Except as noted otherwise, Casey County deeds and order books (estate records) cited in this summary were accessed between 28 June and 1 July 2018. Microfilm numbers are provided to make it easier for others to locate the cited digitized records at FamilySearch.org by doing a Catalog search.

² 1870 U.S. census, Casey County, Kentucky, population schedule, Jenkins District, p. 6 (penned), dwelling 38, family 38, Isabella Sloan, age 20, in the household of F.M. Sloan; digital image, Ancestry.com (<https://www.ancestry.com> : 2009), citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 454.

³ 1880 U.S. census, Casey County, Kentucky, population schedule, District 21, enumeration district (ED) 021, p. 730 (stamped), dwelling 294, family 294, Isabelle Sloan, wife, age 30, in the household of Francis Sloan (indexed as Frances); digital image, Ancestry.com : 2010, citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 408. This was Isabelle's last census appearance.

⁴ Casey County, Kentucky, marriage register entry for Francis M. Sloan and Isabella Durham, 23 February 1869; "County Marriage Records, 1783-1965," digital image, Ancestry.com : 2016. Marriage bonds are only available beginning in 1872 (Casey County, Kentucky Clerk's office, 606-787-6471, phone contact 29 November 2019).

⁵ Casey County, Kentucky Deeds v. 18, p. 531, microfilm no. 591573, image 283, FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org>). In this deed Francis's given name is shown as F.M. in the title, as Frank M. in the body, as Fannie M. in the signature with a question mark above it and as Francis M. in the clerk's acknowledgement with a check mark above it.

⁶ Casey Co., Ky., marriage register entry for John Durham and Nancy Lucas, 16 December 1819; "County Marriage Records, 1783-1965," digital image, Ancestry.com.

⁷ A marriage record has not been found but Margaret's death record names her parents as Thomas and Alsy Brown (Casey County, Kentucky, death register entry for Margaret Durham, line 14, 17 June 1877; "Death Records, 1852-1965," digital image, Ancestry.com : 2007).

⁸ 1850 U.S. census, Casey County, Kentucky, population schedule, District No. 1, p. [348B], dwelling 316, family 316, John Durham; digital image, Ancestry.com: 2009, citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 196.

- Ann S [Fanny], 20
- Neoma, 18
- Warner, 16
- Wm J, 14
- Nancy, 10
- Milton H, 10
- Lucy D, 6

Nancy Durham was the daughter of John Lucas, according to an 1851 deed. Since she was deceased by then, her children and three grandchildren were named as his heirs-at-law, beginning with the five oldest children shown in John Durham's 1850 household.

"This Indenture made this 16th day of May 1851 Between John L Durham Fanny S Durham Moame Durham Warriner Durham William J Durham Lafayette King Englis J King Nancy J King Coleman Durham William B Hatter & Polly Ann Hatter his wife who are children at law of Nancy Durham dec^d...all of whom are heirs at law of John Lucas..."⁹

The three Kings named were the children of Nancy's deceased daughter, Sally Durham, who married David W. King in 1835.¹⁰ These children — as Lafayette, James E. and Nancy — are shown in the household of their widowed father in the 1850 census.¹¹

FANNY DURHAM'S MARRIAGE AND DEATH

Fanny Durham married William R. Perkins in Casey County on 31 January 1856¹² but neither the Perkinses nor Isabelle Durham were found in a strategic search of the 1860 census.

Fanny died in Casey County in October 1861. Her death record gives her age as 28 and identifies her parents as John and Nancy Durham.¹³ She had two daughters, Josephine and Elizabeth Perkins, who were shown living with their father in the 1870 census.¹⁴

⁹ Casey Co., Ky. Deeds v. 6-7, 1849-1863, microfilm no. 591567; v. 6, pp. 540-542, images 294-295, FamilySearch.org. Fanny's middle initial seems to vary between S and L but this may be attributable to the clerk's handwriting and the difficulty distinguishing his intent.

¹⁰ Casey Co., Ky., marriage register entry for David W. King and Sally Jane Durham, 20 September 1835; "County Marriage Records, 1783-1965," digital image, Ancestry.com.

¹¹ 1850 U.S. census, Casey County, Kentucky, population schedule, District No. 1, p. [351B], dwelling 364, family 364, David W. King (indexed as David H.); digital image, Ancestry.com : 2009, citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 196.

¹² Casey Co., Ky., marriage register entry for Wm R. Perkins and Fany S. Durham, 31 January 1856; "County Marriage Records, 1783-1965," digital image, Ancestry.com.

¹³ Casey Co., Ky., death register entry for Frances Perkins, line 7, October 1861; "Death Records, 1852-1965," digital image, Ancestry.com.

Reconciling conflicting information

Fanny's age as reported in the 1850 census conflicts with what was reported in her death record, the first yielding a birth year of 1830 and the second yielding a birth year of 1833. Two things suggest that 1830 is the more accurate year of birth:

First, the ordering of the children's names in the 1851 deed matches the ordering by age, from oldest to youngest, of the children still living at home in 1850: John L., age 21, is followed by Ann S. (Fanny), age 20, and so on — as with the census, this would have been a logical way to make sure all of them were named. These children are then followed by the ones who had left home by 1850, i.e., daughter Sally (her heirs), Coleman Durham and Polly Ann (Durham) Hatter.

Second, an 1833 birth year for Fanny implies a less likely child-bearing history for Nancy Durham, as shown below:

Birth year / birth order comparison based on two records ¹⁵			
1850 census		Fanny's death record	
Child	Born	Child	Born
John L.	1829	John L.	1829
Ann S. (Fanny)	1830	Meomy	1832
Meomy	1832	Fanny	1833
Warner	1834	Warner	1834
William J.	1836	William J.	1836

Between Nancy Durham's marriage in December 1819 and the birth of her youngest child, William J., in about 1836, she bore eight known children over about 16 years, averaging one child every two years as would have been common for the time.¹⁶ This is more consistent with the first scenario where, except for the one-year difference between John and Fanny, the children's births are spaced two years apart. The second scenario, on the other hand, reflects a three-year gap between the two oldest children followed by three children — Meomy, Fanny and Warner — born a year apart.

¹⁴ 1870 U.S. census, Casey County, Kentucky, population schedule, Jenkins Precinct, p. 28 (stamped), dwelling 193, family 193, William R. Perkins (indexed as Parkins); digital image, Ancestry.com : 2009, citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 454.

¹⁵ More precise birth information has been found only for Meomy, whose grave marker also shows the year of birth as 1832: Findagrave.com (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 18 December 2019), photograph, gravestone for Meomy Durham (1832-1877), memorial page no. 17742126, Casey County, Kentucky.

¹⁶ Aaron Goodwin, "Determining and Expressing Dates," *NGS Monthly* (August 2019), e-journal (<https://ngsmonthly.ngsgenealogy.org/determining-and-expressing-dates/> : accessed 11 September 2019), especially para. 12: "For Americans from Europe until nearly the 20th century, women typically married at about 20 and men at about 25. They generally had their first child one year after marriage, and subsequent children were spaced two years apart."

JOHN DURHAM'S ESTATE

John Durham died in about 1873 and Coleman Durham was appointed Administrator of his personal estate on 24 March 1873.¹⁷

In November 1873, W.R. Perkins was appointed guardian of Josephine and Betsy M. Perkins (his daughters by the deceased Fanny Durham), who were "heirs-at-law of John Durham, Decd."¹⁸

John Durham's widow, Margaret, died in June 1877¹⁹ and Milton H. Durham was appointed Administrator of her personal estate in July.²⁰ Milton was the son of John and Margaret Durham, shown in their 1850 household but not named in the 1851 deed as one of Nancy (Lucas) Durham's heirs.

At the January 1878 term of court the heirs of John Durham petitioned for the distribution of the "dower lands allotted to Mrs. Peggy Durham, decd." Instructions to the commissioners on the allotments to be made included one "To Bettie M. & Josephine Perkins & Izabella Sloan Jointly 1/11 of said land."²¹

As previously cited, Francis M. and Isabelle Sloan sold Isabelle's share in July 1877, "one undivided third part of one share of all the land owned by John Durham at his death, said share is Knowned as the share of Fannie Durham Daughter of said John Durham Decd."

This is one of two deeds concerning John Durham's land that predates the 1878 court order. The other was executed on 26 December 1876 when James M. Durham sold "1/4 part of 1/11 part of land possessed by John Durham at his death."²²

From the language of these deeds the Sloans and James Durham were selling their right, title and interest in the land rather than the land itself, and the portion due to Isabelle Sloan would have been known as of John Durham's death in 1873, i.e., that he'd had 11 children including daughter Fanny, who died in 1861 leaving three heirs.

¹⁷ Casey County, Kentucky, Order books (County Court) v. 7-9, 1867-1889, microfilm no. 591583; v. 7, p. 303, image 158; images, FamilySearch.org. Also, Administrators Bonds 1852-1884, p. 167, consulted as "Kentucky, Wills and Probate Records, 1774-1989," digital image, Ancestry.com : 2015.

¹⁸ Ibid.; v. 7, p. 334, image 174.

¹⁹ Casey Co., Ky., death register entry for Margaret Durham, line 14, 17 June 1877; "Death Records, 1852-1965," digital image, Ancestry.com.

²⁰ Casey Co., Ky., Order book v. 8, p. 77, image 282, FamilySearch.org.

²¹ Ibid.; pp. 102-103, image 295.

²² Casey Co., Ky. Deeds v. 18, p. 529, image 282, FamilySearch.org.

The same would be true for James M. Durham. The partition order directed that an allotment be made "To Marion Durham James M Durham Tolinta S Durham & Lucretia Durham Jointly 1/11 of said land."²³ These were the heirs of John Durham's son Warner, who died in 1864.²⁴ Warner Durham and Sally Perkins were named as the parents in James M. Durham's birth record²⁵ and Lucretia Durham's death record.²⁶ Warner's three oldest children were part of his 1860 household, as James M., 4; George M., 2; and Sintha S. Durham, 2/12,²⁷ and all four children were in the widowed Sally Durham's 1870 household, as James M., 14; George 13; Malinda, 11; and Luisa, 6.²⁸

²³ Casey Co., Ky. Order book v. 8, pp. 102-103, image 295, FamilySearch.org.

²⁴ Casey County, Kentucky Order Books v. 4-6, 1839-1867, microfilm no. 591582; v. 6, p. 316, image 665, FamilySearch.org; 7 November 1864, "Warner Durham having departed this life intestate and the widow having waived the right to administer Ordered that John Durham be and is appointed administrator of the personal estate of said deceased..."

²⁵ Casey County, Kentucky, birth register entry for James M. Durham, line 5, 20 August 1855; "Birth Records, 1847-1911," digital image, Ancestry.com : 2007.

²⁶ Casey County, Kentucky, death certificate no. 21439, Lucrecy Jane Durham (indexed as Lucney Janes Durham), 28 September 1938; "Death Records, 1852-1965," digital image, Ancestry.com.

²⁷ 1860 U.S. census, Casey County, Kentucky, population schedule, District No. 3, p. 25 (penned), dwelling 155, family 155, Warner Durham; digital image, Ancestry.com : 2009, citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 361.

²⁸ 1870 U.S. census, Casey County, Kentucky, population schedule, Jenkins District, p. 30 (penned), dwelling 209, family 209, Sally Durham; digital image, Ancestry.com : 2009, citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 454.